

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM  
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2003

Chief, Lincoln

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DISPATCH NO. HGG-A-658

JAN 20 1954

DATE:

FROM : Chief of Station, Guatemala [ ]

SUBJECT: GENERAL— PBSUCCESS

SPECIFIC— Psychological Barometer Report (Period Ending 16 January 1954)

Reference: (a) HGG-A-643  
(b) HGG-A-613

1. For the purposes of this report there have been no significant changes during this period in the situation described in references (a) and (b).
2. The impending OAS meeting at Caracas continues to be a much-discussed and controversial subject which is the basis for "anti-intervention" propaganda in the official and/or communist press. During this period a pro-government source of unknown reliability boasted that Guatemala can count on support from Chile, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and Cuba in defeating the U. S. proposal to investigate communist infiltration in Latin America.
3. The explosive situation regarding illegal seizures of land has subsided somewhat but remains serious. Possibly it may lead to personal conflict between Carlos Manuel PELLEGER and Major Alfonso MARTINEZ which could result in the disposal of one or both principals. MARTINEZ is reported to have said that he has killed bigger men than PELLEGER.
4. There has been an unabated flow of rumors regarding the possibility of civil disturbances designed to overthrow the ARBENZ government, and in this connection there appears to be growing fear that such disturbances will be extremely bloody. A fairly reliable source with many contacts in local opposition circles states that the government and the communists have prepared a list of all opposition personalities who are to be killed if and when an anti-government outbreak occurs. Pertinent reports relating to real or alleged anti-government activities have been forwarded under separate cover(s).
5. Two major items of public speculation during this reporting period were statements attributed to Ambassador PEURIFOY and Senator WILEY. In the January 9th issue of TIME Ambassador PEURIFOY reportedly stated that the United States could not permit the establishment of a Soviet republic between Texas and the Panama Canal and that public opinion in the United States might force the government to take some action. Subsequently, the Embassy issued a denial in a note to the Guatemalan Foreign Office. However, it is generally believed that the Ambassador did in fact make some statement along the lines indicated, and it

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is reported that the Guatemalan Government and its supporters are worried that the United States will intervene to suppress communism and/or overthrow the ARBENZ regime. On the other hand, it is reported that many opposition individuals and groups are encouraged by PEURIFOY's alleged statement.

Senator WILEY's speech before the United States Senate, a speech in which he cited examples of recent events that prove the existence of communism in Guatemala and Russia's relation thereto, has had a somewhat similar reception. To date there has been no specific refutation of the points cited by Senator WILEY but the speech in general has been denounced by pro-government spokesmen as an act of intervention.

Generally the foregoing events appear to have had a favorable reception in the anti-communist forces are encouraged to know that outside aid may eventually be forthcoming. To that extent the feeling of hopelessness that has prevailed here for many months (see previous reports) has been partially dissipated. It should be noted, however, that such speeches also tend to offend and alienate anti-communists who are at the same time strongly nationalistic. The net result for the purposes of this report cannot be evaluated as yet.

[ ]  
George W. Tranger

19 January 1954

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